
American Girl
January/February 2007
$4.50
40 Ways to Fill Winter with Fun
Make Sweet Snowpeople
What Every Friendship Needs
Plus! Valentine's Day gifts, puzzles, and jokes

American Girl

Volume 15, Number 1

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See AG Online!
Visit americangirl.com to peek behind the scenes of AG magazine!
Always get a parent's permission before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.

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Enough fun ideas to fill two cool months

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One girl plus one dog makes one great team.

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About the Cover

Meet Mary M., age 10. We asked her some sweet questions about this issue.

Best Valentine's Day tradition?

Giving cards to my mom, dad, and classmates

Nicest valentine you ever got?

A stuffed bear from my uncle that had kiss marks printed on its fur

Favorite way to spend a snow day?

Watching TV wrapped in a blanket and drinking hot chocolate!

Mary M.

For more about our cover shoot, go to "Behind the Scenes" on page 49.



Great Friendships

The secrets to every friendship from A to Z!

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Cover photo: Jose Martinez

Letters from You

Family Ties

I liked Ana D.'s story about going back to her birthplace in the September/October 2006 issue. My brother is from Ecuador, and we are planning to go back there this summer. I was very inspired by this article, and that's one of the reasons I read AG. Thanks!

Katherine :-)
Age 12

Less Stress

The "Get It Together" canvas clothing divider in September/October was such a great idea! It's helped make me more organized *and* my mornings are less stressful!

Courtney R.
Age 13, Massachusetts

Grand Gift

I really loved "A Grand Plan" in September/October. I'm going to a family reunion soon, and I'm going to give my great-grandma a box filled with memories of her so that she'll know just how special she is to me. Thanks for the great idea!

Hannah G.
Age 11, Iowa

Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to im_agmag_editor@americangirl.com. Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't print every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Win It!

On page 24, you'll read about our latest Win It! contest. To enter, send a postcard by February 15 with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—J/F 07
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

Official Rules

1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by February 15, 2007. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed. A parent or guardian must sign the entry.
4. One winner will be chosen at random.
5. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

Illustrations: Mary Lynn Blasutta

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Cover Credits: Wardrobe styling: Judy Redder. Hair: Christine Morse. Pink vest by Lands' End. Striped sweater vest by The Children's Place.

American Girl® (ISSN 1062-7812, Canadian Sales Agreement Number 40635507) is published bimonthly by Pleasant Company Publications, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562.

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Customer Service: 1-800-234-1278. *Subscribe:* Send change of address information six weeks before moving to *American Girl*, P.O. Box 5534, Harlan, IA 51593-1034. Send old address label (recent mailing label is best), new address, and new telephone number, or call 1-800-234-1278. *Editorial Offices: American Girl*, Editorial Department, P.O. Box 620986, Middleton, WI 53562-0986. Pleasant Company Publications cannot accept liability for loss or damage of photographs or other materials. Unsolicited materials will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. All comments and suggestions received by *American Girl* become the property of *American Girl* and may be used without compensation or acknowledgment. *American Girl*®, Follow Your Inner Star™, Girls Express®, and Mini Mag™ are trademarks owned by American Girl, LLC. American Girl trademarks cannot be used without the express written consent of American Girl, LLC. ISBN 978-1-59369-301-5.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation of *American Girl*, Publication No. 1062-7812. Filing date: 9/12/06. Issue frequency: Bimonthly. No. issues published annually: 6. Annual subscription price: $22.95. Owner: Mattel, Inc. Headquarters: 333 Continental Blvd., El Segundo, CA 90245. Publisher: Diane Morgenthaler. Editor: Kristi Thom. Senior Managing Editor: Barbara Stretchberry.

	Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date
A. Total number of copies (Net press run)	756,852	753,000
B. Paid circulation		
1. Paid/requested circ. mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541	601,962	605,306
2. Paid in-county subscriptions	0	0
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	45,477	44,776
4. Other classes mailed through the USPS	28	0
C. Total paid and/or requested circ.	647,467	650,082
D. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside-county stated on Form 3541	286	265
2. In-county stated on Form 3541	0	0
3. Other classes mailed through USPS	N/A	N/A
E. Free distribution outside mail (Carriers or other means)	2,013	1,500
F. Total free distribution (Sum of D and E)	2,299	1,765
G. Total distribution	649,766	651,847
H. Copies not distributed	107,923	101,153
I. Total (sum of G and H)	757,689	753,000
Percent paid and/or requested circulation	99.65%	99.73%

American Girl®

Girls EXPRESS

Flower Girl

When an ice-skating competition heats up, Katie S. keeps her cool. In between skaters' performances, Katie glides around as a skate sweeper, collecting flowers and stuffed animals that fans throw on the ice.

Katie, 10, also looks for tiny beads that fall off costumes and other bits of litter that can make the ice dangerous. "Skaters can trip if the ice isn't clear," says the Colorado girl, who is a competitive skater herself. While Katie skate sweeps, she has to dodge the next skaters warming up. "They do single jumps. You have to watch out," Katie says.

When Katie works as a skate sweeper for Olympic medalists and hopefuls, such as Bebe Liang from TV's *Ice Diaries,* she gets a rink-side view of the skaters. "They skate by really fast, and you can feel the wind!"

When Katie gives the goodies to these super skaters, she hopes their talents will rub off. "They inspire me!"



Did You Know?

You'll flip for these fun facts!

Candy Dandy

Tootsie Roll chocolate candies were named after the daughter of the candy maker who invented them. The daughter's real name was Clara, but her nickname was Tootsie. How sweet!



Buzzword

quirks

How to say it: KWERKS

What it means: peculiar or odd behaviors

One way to use it: One of Naomi's funny quirks is snorting when she laughs really hard.

The buzzword is tucked into two places in this issue. Can you find both? The answer is on page 40.

Find It!

Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

Photo: Chris Hynes Illustrations: Tracey Wood

Sunday Mornings

On Sunday mornings
Mom makes pancakes
With extra syrup
And Dad lets me jump on the bed
We have a great time squirting
Toothpaste on the mirror
We don't have to wipe it off
On Fridays we do
We like eating extra chocolate
And Mom makes chocolate pancakes
When the pancakes get cold
We just give them to the birds
I love Sunday mornings





Rosie D.
Age 9, California

True Story

A shivering, furry friend finds a home with two sisters.

Dear American Girl,

Last February, our mom was walking our dog down our long, tree-lined driveway. Our dog started pulling at the leash, and our mom thought that a rabbit or squirrel was nearby. She stepped into the woods and was shocked to see a guinea pig. There were bald patches in her fur, and her ears looked like they had been bitten. She was hiding by a tree root, shivering and scavenging for food.

When we got off of the bus that day, our mom was waiting for us. She told us about the guinea pig. We all knew that we would have to help the guinea pig or else she would die in the cold. We caught the guinea pig in a box and moved her into an old rabbit cage. We asked around to see if we could find her owner, but we were unsuccessful. So we decided to take her to the vet. The guinea pig was sick, so we nursed her back to health with some gross medicine that smelled like rotten eggs.

Now we have the guinea pig as a pet! Her name is Lucky Miracle—Lucky because she was lucky, and Miracle because the vet was amazed that she lived.

Sincerely,

Keri S. & Shannon S.

Ages 14 and 12, New Jersey





Here are Keri and Shannon with Lucky Miracle!

Need a Lift?



Kiki N. has a need for speed—the 11-year-old Oregon girl is a competitive skier. She does *giant slalom*, which is fast downhill skiing in between sets of poles, called "gates." Kiki has been skiing since she was three and racing since she was eight, and she says that it's important to take a few chances as you're learning something new. "If you fall, you should get up and try harder. When you fall, you learn more than if you're more cautious and don't fall."

Kiki trains three days a week in winter but says that training the mind is as important as training the body. "If you lose, you don't want to pitch a fit in front of everybody, and if you win, you don't want to go yapping about how good you are," she says. "You know if you lose that you tried your hardest, and that's the most important thing."

Photo: Bryan Hilts

Cut out your answer and mail it to us with your first and last name, address, and birth date.

Creative Corner



Mitten Mini Bag

Cut out card. Flip over for directions.

AG Poll

In our July/August issue, we asked you which quality described you best. You said:

Creative 261
Smart 175
Friendly 145
Spirited 113
Kind 78
Brave 43

Many of you circled more than one—or all!—of the qualities.

Next question:

Which U.S. tourist destination would you most like to visit? Circle your choice.



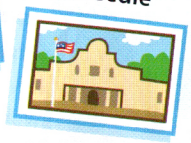
Niagara Falls



Seattle's Space Needle



The Grand Canyon



The Alamo

Mitten Mini Bag

Find a cute yarn mitten that has lost its mate. Thread a large plastic needle with ribbon. Send point of needle down through one layer of the mitten and back up before pulling ribbon through, leaving a long tail. Sew all the way around the wrist of the mitten, making stitches half an inch apart. To finish, double-knot the ribbon to form a strap. Sew cute!

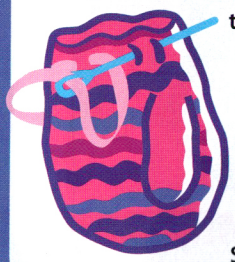


Photo: Chris Hynes Illustration: Tracey Wood

Help Wanted!

Friendships are mostly fun, but quarrels and disagreements can test even the best of friends. Tell us about a time that you and a friend got into a fight. Why did you fight? How long did the fight last? Were you able to solve the problem? What did you do to repair your friendship? How do you feel about each other now? Send your letter to the address on page 2.



Winter Warm-Ups

Try these simple movements to get your blood flowing—you'll feel toasty in no time.

Just Hang Out

Stand up and bend your body forward as far as it will go comfortably. Hang for about 20 seconds, and then stand up slowly. (Don't forget to breathe!)

Balancing Act

Pretend that you're walking a wobbly tightrope from one end of your house to the other. Once the "tightrope" ends, you'll be all warmed up!



Take Your Turn

Windmill your arms forward and then backward from the shoulder several times. Your hands should feel much warmer.



Couch Boogie

While sitting on the couch, make up a dance using only your arms or your legs.

Heart Smarts

Each year, new sayings are printed on Sweethearts Conversation Hearts. Can you match the following sayings to the decade in which they first appeared?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

a. 1920s b. 1960s c. 1980s
d. 1950s e. 1970s f. 1990s

Answers: 1. d, 2. f, 3. a, 4. c, 5. b, 6. e

AG Art Gallery

These girls were created by girls like you!





Ashley J.
Age 12, New Jersey





Katie J.
Age 13, California





Tamryn K.
Age 10, Arizona





Rachel M.
Age 13, Wisconsin

We're looking for **artwork** for our gallery. Send color **copies** of your original artwork to the address on page 2. Sorry, we can't return **entries.**



Christina W.
Age 14, Texas



Shining Star

Lindsey M. lives in the mountains of Colorado, where snowstorms can make driving impossible. Lindsey, 11, knew that some of her elderly or disabled neighbors relied on meals delivered by volunteer drivers. If a bad snowstorm hit and drivers couldn't get through, some people might have to go without food. So a few years ago, Lindsey came up with a way to help: she'd make up boxes of emergency food for her elderly neighbors.

After writing to local organizations to raise money, Lindsey collected shoe boxes and then hit the grocery store with her mom. They bought canned peaches, beef stew, tuna, sausages, and tomato juice, as well as crackers, cookies, and peppermints. Lindsey filled, taped, labeled, and delivered 20 Blizzard Boxes, which contained several meals each. Last winter, she delivered another 18 boxes to folks who otherwise might have had to wait out a snowstorm without much to eat. "When I realized how much of a difference I made, it made me feel really good," Lindsey says.



Lindsey with a Blizzard Box

You can shine, too.
Your older neighbors might need your help this winter. Ask your parents if you can shovel sidewalks or get mail for neighbors who might be unsteady on snow or ice.

Paperless Valentines

Your holiday art was loaded with heart!



Flower Power
Carlyn P.
Age 11, New Jersey



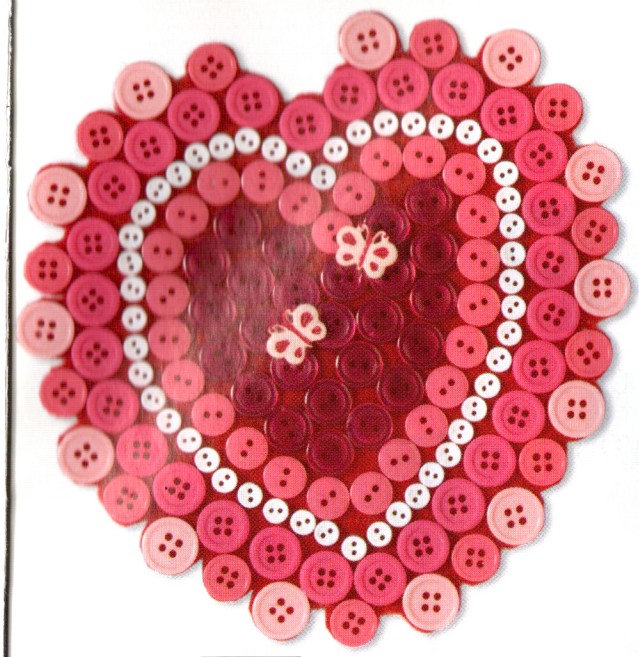
Sew Sweet
Katie K.
Age 11, Washington



Bear Hug
Hannah E.
Age 10, Wisconsin



Heart String
Regan K.
Age 10, Illinois





It's Denimite!

Shelby C.
Age 15, California







Keychain Keepsake

Alyssa S.
Age 12, New Jersey



Cute As a Button

Mia D.
Age 10, California





Love Bug

Jessie W.
Age 12, North Carolina



Heart Beads

Sophie M.B.
Age 9, Ohio





New Contest: Design a Theme-Park Ride

Imagine a theme park just for girls. What ride would you create? A spinning "Tilt-a-Girl" ride, or a horse-shaped roller coaster? Draw a picture of your ride or describe it in words. Send your entry to the address on page 2, along with your first and last name, address, school photo, and birth date. Deadline: February 10, 2007. Winners will appear in the July/August 2007 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.

Photos: Chris Hynes Illustration: Lauren Scheuer

Cheering Up



What special thing do you do for a friend or family member who's blue? Readers like you share their best mood boosters.



When my friend is feeling down, sometimes she doesn't want to talk. In that case, I mail her a note. I write that everything will be all right, and I update her on things that are happening with me. I also try to send good thoughts.



Skylar P.
Age 11, New Hampshire



When I need to cheer up a friend, I grab a book, read a sentence out of the book in a silly voice, and act out the lines. My friend and I laugh so hard that our faces turn red, and my friend starts to forget her sad feelings.

Megan B.
Age 13, Nebraska





My favorite way to cheer someone up is to look her in the face and say, "Don't smile!" I keep on saying it until she starts laughing. Even on their gloomiest days, none of my friends and family can help but smile. It never fails!

Meghan M.
Age 9, Colorado



When my good friend's cat died, I made her a book of notes from friends and family that told about how everyone remembered the cat. My friend loved the book and still displays it in her room. It made me feel good to see her smiling.

Hannah R.
Age 14, Texas



My friend and I have two silly dance moves that we made up. Whenever my friend or anyone else is feeling sad, I say, "Don't make me start dancing!" and the person always laughs.

Audrey C.
Age 12, Kansas

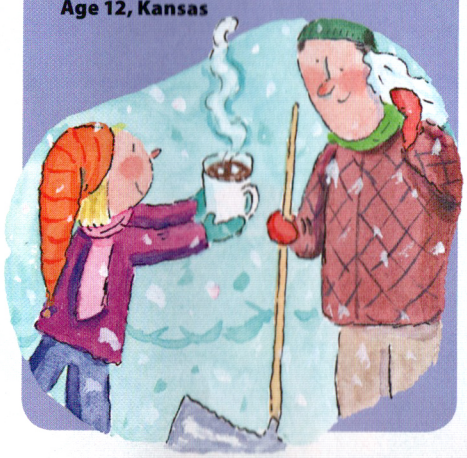
Big Truth

Sometimes just being there is enough.



My dad gets grumpy when it's cold out. I make him some cocoa and attach a coupon for free snow shoveling to the mug. My dad says the cocoa tastes wonderful, smiles, and then hands me a snow shovel.

Elizabeth B.
Age 12, Kansas





I create a package of things, such as stickers or candy, for the person. I give each object a meaning. For instance, if I put in a paper clip, I'd say that it is to hold things together, even if they are falling apart.

Nelle G.
Age 11, Washington



Remember this when you're trying to cheer someone up: Let her know that if she wants to cry, she can. If she wants to talk, you'll listen. And if she doesn't want to talk about it, she doesn't have to.

Haley S.
Age 10, Missouri

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Trying new things. Have you ever taken a chance and tried something that you never thought you could do? Was it an unfamiliar food or a difficult sport, or did you visit an interesting place? Were you scared? What made you brave enough to try it? Did you like it?

Send answers, name, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 2. Deadline: February 7, 2007. Some of your answers will appear in the July/August 2007 issue. ★



Illustrations: Laura Cornell

Sweet Snowpeople

You don't need snow to build this frosty family! Popcorn people are easy to make and a treat to eat.



Decorate a vanilla wafer to make a cap for Mom. Attach with frosting.

Cut little pieces of Fruit Streamers and attach to head with frosting to make bangs.

Use jelly candy to make a hat and a purse. Attach with frosting.

YOU WILL NEED

An adult to help you

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, plus a little for greasing pan and hands
- 4 cups mini marshmallows
- 9 cups popped popcorn
- Container of premade vanilla frosting
- Fruit Streamers (available at grocery and discount stores)
- Jelly candies
- Fruit leather
- Mini and regular M&M's
- Vanilla wafers
- Life Savers
- Licorice

Equipment

- Saucepan
- Mixing spoon
- 9-by-13-inch pan
- Clean scissors



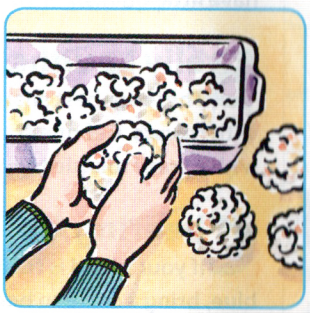
1 Wash hands. Ask an adult to help you melt butter in a saucepan over low heat. Stir in marshmallows. Cook until mixture is melted and syrupy, stirring constantly.



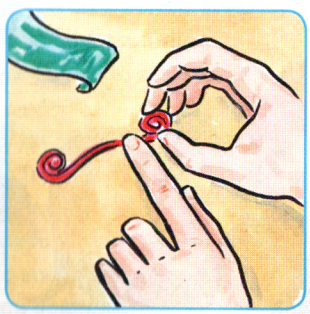
2 Grease pan with butter. Pour popcorn into pan. Ask an adult to help you pour marshmallow mixture over popcorn. Mix with spoon to coat evenly.



3 Let mixture cool several minutes until it is warm (but not hot!). Smear butter on your hands. Mix popcorn with your hands to make sure it is evenly coated.



4 Form popcorn into 3 large balls and 3 small balls. (Tip: if mixture is too sticky, let it cool slightly.) Press balls to make them flat on the bottom. Use frosting to connect popcorn balls.



5 To make hair, loop the end of a Fruit Streamer and attach with frosting to make a curl. Repeat on other side. Attach hair to head with a dab of frosting.



6 Cut small strips of licorice for mouths and eyebrows. Use fruit leather or Fruit Streamers to make scarves. Attach mini M&M's for eyes and noses. Use frosting to attach candy.

Photo: Mike Walker Styling: Tobe LeMoine Illustrations: Shawn Banner

Great Friendships

Here is what every friendship needs from A to Z!



Acceptance
Love your friends for who they are—even if they have little quirks.

Belly Laughs
These are best shared with friends. Get one started with a crazy tongue twister.

Cheering Up
If your friend is feeling blue, bring a smile to her face. See pages 10 and 11 for some great ideas.

Differences
You and your friend won't always agree. If you don't agree with something she says, let her know. Say, "That's one way to look at it, but this is how I see it..."

Effort
Don't always wait for your friend's invitation. Make sure you call her up sometimes and invite her to do something together.

Fun
What's a friendship without a lot of fun?



Gabbing
Whether you're chatting in person or on the phone, there's nothing like a good gab with a friend. Just remember to keep the other "G" word out of it—*gossip*.

Honesty
It's important to be honest with your friends. If a friend hurts your feelings, tell her. Say, "Remember the other day? It's been bothering me. I was really hurt by..."



Independence
You and your friend love to spend time together, but remember to spend time apart. You'll both experience things that you can tell each other about the next time you're together.

Jokes
Save a good joke for a time when your friend needs a laugh the most. Need a joke? See page 39.

Kindness
The more you give, the more you receive.

Listening
If your friend is talking to you, really listen to her. If you are thinking about what you are going to say next, then you aren't *really* listening.



Illustrations: Cathi Mingus

Manners
Even though you are with her all the time, don't forget to say "please" and "thank you" to your friend.

Nicknames
Having special names for each other is like having your own friendship code.



Oops!
No friendship is perfect. Remember to say, "I'm sorry" when you may have hurt your friend.

Pictures
Photos capture great memories. Don't forget the camera on your next fun get-together.

Questions
Asking questions to get to know your friend better is O.K., but don't ask any that will embarrass her.

Reliability
If you promise to spend Saturday afternoon with your friend, follow through. She'll know you're a true-blue friend.

Sharing
Friends are there to share everything from clothes to books. Remember to give a due date when you want an item returned. If a friend's had it too long, it's O.K. to ask for it back.

Thoughtfulness
Little things mean a lot. The next time she's home sick, take extra good notes to give her about homework assignments.

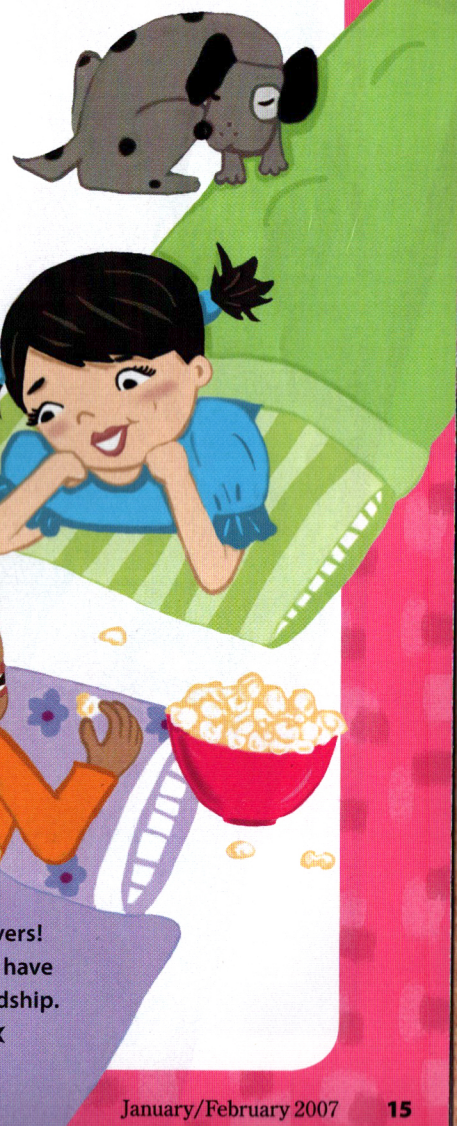
Understanding
Be understanding when she makes a mistake.

Variety
Try new things together. Make a list of all the fun things you want to do and check them off as you do them.

Wishes
Make a wish on a shooting star for your friend.

XOXO
Next time you send her an e-mail, don't forget a sweet sign-off, such as XOXO. Or make up one of your own, such as SYLS (See You Later, Sunshine), or LWYL (Laugh With Ya Later).

Yes!
Encourage each other in everything you both do. Go to one of her games just to cheer her on.



ZZZ
ZZZ stands for sleepovers! Get your gals together and have one to celebrate your friendship. Don't forget the camera! ★

It Takes Two



A caring canine gives Shea confidence, independence, and love.

by Kitson Flynn



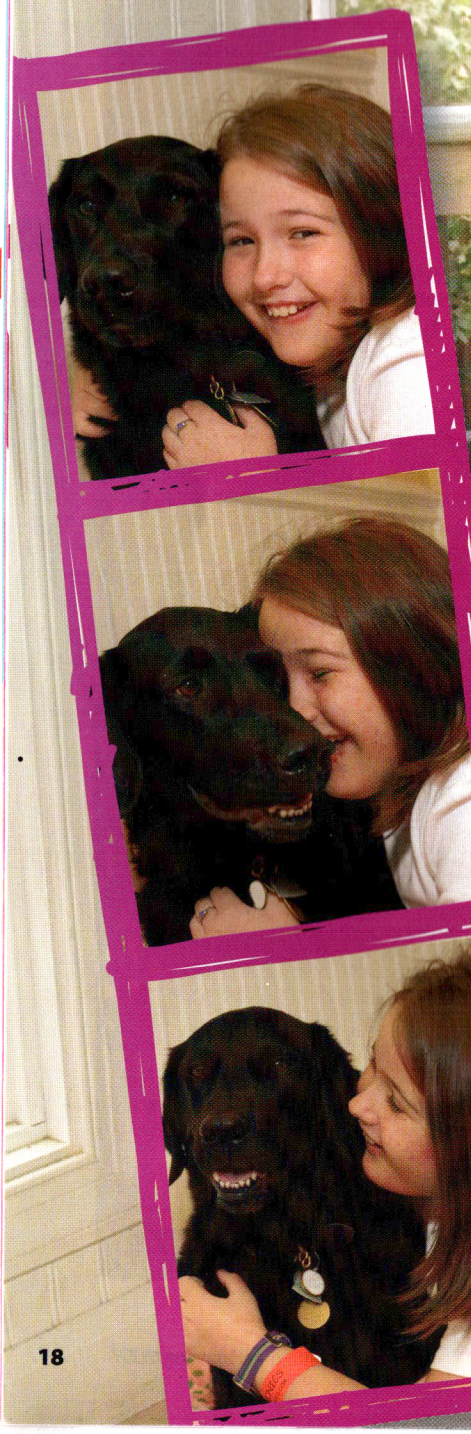


Photos: Gene Peach

Flip through Shea M.'s school yearbook, and when you find her picture, you'll notice something unusual about the photo next to hers. It's a picture of a dog! "That's Mercer," says 11-year-old Shea, who can't stop grinning when she talks about her dog. "He goes to school, too, so he's in the yearbook."

The black Lab mix is Shea's assistance dog. Shea uses a wheelchair because she has a rare disease that causes extreme muscle weakness. Mercer is specially trained to open doors for Shea, carry and pick things up, and speak on command when necessary.

One of Mercer's most important duties is giving Shea the ability to get around by herself. That's why he goes to school with her. With Mercer's help, using a wheelchair doesn't stop the Virginia girl from being a regular kid. "We are a great team," Shea says. With Mercer at her side, Shea feels as if she can do anything.





In 2004, Shea and her mom traveled to New York to attend a two-week training session with an assistance-dog organization. They learned all about handling and caring for an assistance dog. At the end of the two weeks, Shea was paired up with Mercer, her first assistance dog. "He was just so happy to see me, even though we had never met before," Shea remembers. "Mercer and I were supposed to end up together."

In addition to learning all of the commands for day-to-day work with Mercer, Shea learned how to brush his teeth as well as groom, feed, and bathe him. Mercer, who is four, will continue to work with Shea until he retires on his seventh birthday. "We'll celebrate his birthday in his favorite way," says Shea, "with a cupcake topped with liver-flavored toothpaste." Then Mercer will become Shea's pet, and she'll get another assistance dog.

"He was just so happy to see me, even though we had never met before. Mercer and I were suposed to end up together."

For Shea, the only bad thing about having Mercer is having to leave him sometimes, such as when her family went on a cruise. "I didn't want to go because it meant leaving Mercer," says Shea. "It's really hard to be without him. We're two peas in a pod."

Every morning, Mercer—who shares Shea's bed *and* pillow—wakes Shea with canine kisses. "Mercer is my alarm clock," she says. "Then my dad comes in and gets me out of bed." After getting dressed, Shea meets Mercer in the kitchen for breakfast.

On school days, when they're done eating, Mercer wiggles and waits for the command to "stand" and "dress" in his blue vest. Once he's got his vest on, he's all business. With Mercer carrying Shea's backpack, the pair head out the door to wait for the school bus.

"Everybody at school loves having Mercer around," Shea says, adding that "it lightens them up about school, and it lightens me up about school."

Mercer carries Shea's lunch, picks up her pencils, opens doors, and is very good company to Shea. When she has Mercer with her, Shea feels confident.

Even some of the fun things about school can be difficult because Shea uses a wheelchair.

"Gym class is often hard for me because everybody is running around and I can't do that," Shea says. "One time, my entire class was playing dodgeball, and I was like a sitting duck. I couldn't throw, and I couldn't catch."

After Shea got hit with the dodgeball a few times, Mercer took action. He ran to Shea and put his front paws on her shoulders to shield her from the balls that were whizzing by. "I kept telling him to get off, but he wouldn't. It is amazing that he is so devoted to taking care of me," Shea says. "All day long, Mercer is working undercover. He might look like he's sleeping next to my desk, but he's always got his eye on me."

"Mercer is undercover. He might look like he's sleeping next to my desk, but he's always got his eye on me."



A federal law allows service dogs to go anywhere their handlers go, including restaurants, parks, and airplanes.



The Canine Code

Assistance dogs like Mercer are working dogs. That means that they're helping to take care of their owners. Working dogs assist people who have problems with vision and hearing, as well as people who have a hard time getting around. "When Mercer is wearing his vest, he knows that he has an important job to do," Shea says.

A working dog often will wear a vest or special harness. Here are some tips to remember when you meet a working dog:

Do respect the dog by not trying to play with him. He gets playtime when he's not working.

Don't allow your pet to confront a working dog.

Do allow the working dog to concentrate. That means **don't** pet, feed, tease, or talk to the dog. It can be distracting and confusing. You *can* talk to the working dog's owner, though.

Do allow a working dog to rest quietly. He has big responsibilities!

When Shea and Mercer get home from school, Shea's mom takes off Mercer's vest and gives him the "release" command. He likes to run around the yard and play with the family's two other dogs, Molly and Curly, when he's off-duty. "He plays and acts silly when he's not working, but when he's wearing his vest, he's very serious," Shea says.

In the afternoons, Mercer usually takes a rest in his kennel. "But even if I'm way across the house from him and I just whisper his name, he's like a dart," Shea says. "He jolts right out of his kennel and is at my side."

Because of Mercer, Shea might get to speak in front of the U.S. Senate on behalf of disabled veterans who could benefit from having assistance dogs. "There's a piece of legislation in the works that would help disabled veterans get assistance dogs," Shea explains. "If it becomes a bill, I might be asked to go to Washington, D.C., to speak about how Mercer has changed my life and how assistance dogs could change the lives of these veterans, too."

For Shea, having an assistance dog has made a big, wonderful difference in her life. "Instead of being known as the girl with the wheelchair, I'm just the girl with the dog." ★

TO DO TODAY January

A flurry of fun

Monday

It's a new year! Write one small goal on each month of your calendar—that way, you'll remember to chase your dreams.

1

Tuesday

Ashley Tisdale's half-birthday is today. Send the *High School Musical* star a card at: Ashley Tisdale c/o Disney Channel 3800 W. Alameda Ave. Burbank, CA 91505

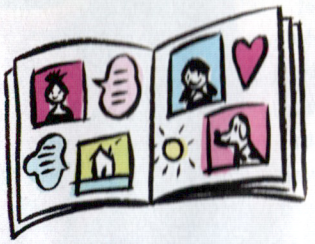
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Sunday

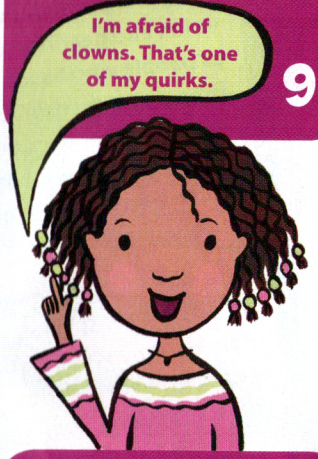
In honor of International Creativity Month, put all your photos into an album or scrapbook. Don't forget the speech bubbles!



7



Today is Word Nerd Day. Use this issue's buzzword, *quirks*, in a conversation.



9



Ask a parent if you can gather up old blankets and towels to donate to the animal shelter. New pet toys would be nice, too!



14

Add some *olé* to your bowl: crumble spicy tortilla chips into tomato soup instead of crackers.



15

Hang a bagel smeared with peanut butter and birdseed outside your house for your feathered friends.

22



Try clementines! They look like little tangerines and taste delicious. They're available in supermarkets this time of year.

23

Sculpt a snow castle! Ask a parent if you can use food coloring to dye the snow different colors. Mix a few drops with water in a spray bottle, and spray onto snow.

28

Write an e-mail to a friend in a secret code—just leave out all of the vowels.

30

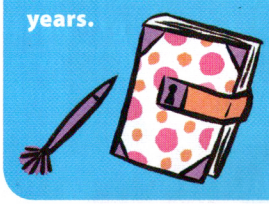
ideas for a wonderful winter!

Wednesday

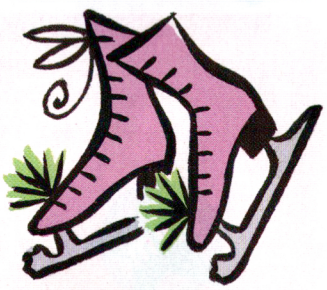


To warm up quickly, blow-dry your hair—even if it isn't wet. Give your 'do a five-second blast, moving the dryer around your head. 10

In your diary, write where you think you'll be in 20 years.



17



Paint the happiest, most colorful picture you can imagine in honor of Inspire Your Heart with Art Day.



Thursday

In honor of Trivia Day, learn a cool fact and spread it around. Here's one: A polar bear uses only its front feet to swim—it's the only four-footed land animal to do that! 4

Ask a parent if you and your friends can jump rope in the basement. Make up a jump-rope routine to music! 11



Make fancy marshmallows for hot cocoa. Place a regular marshmallow in a plastic bag. Flatten with a rolling pin. Then cut marshmallow with a tiny cookie cutter. 25

Friday



Warm up a plain winter hat! Use a dot of fabric glue to attach a colorful patch or appliqué. Let dry.



12

Toast a friend! Clink mugs and say something silly, like "In winter when the snow is drifty, I think our friendship's really nifty." 19

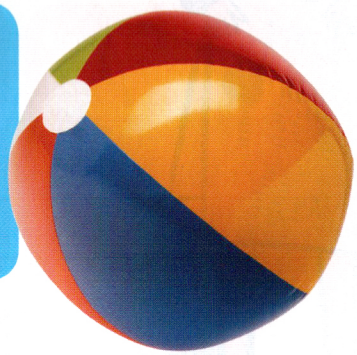
Have a beach party. Lay out beach towels for your friends, and invite them over to watch a beach movie. You can even wear swimsuits! 26

Saturday

January is National Oatmeal Month. Celebrate by trying a new topping for oatmeal, such as applesauce or pancake syrup. 6



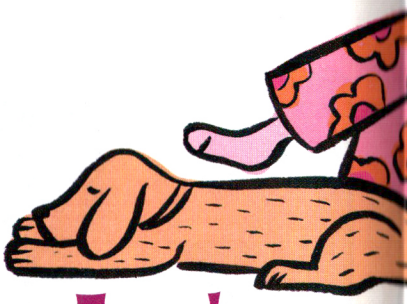




Photos: Chris Hynes Ashley Tisdale photo: Disney Emma Roberts photo: Chris Cuffaro/Nickelodeon Illustrations: Mary Lynn Blasutta

TO DO TODAY February

Even more fun





Sunday

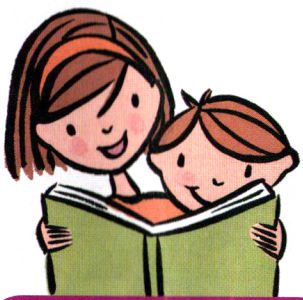
Make nonskid slippers! Cover work area with newspaper. Stuff a pair of socks with paper towels. Draw patterns on the socks' soles with 3-D fabric paint. Let dry. **4**



Stuck inside? Ask a parent if you can rearrange the furniture in your room. **18**

Make an "all about me" collage using words and pictures from the Sunday newspaper. (Make sure everyone has read the paper before you start tearing it up.) **25**

Monday



Random Acts of Kindness Week starts today. Offer to read your younger sibling a bedtime story—and use a different voice for each character. **12**

Form a mini book club. Pick out a library book with your mom. After each of you has read it, schedule a "club meeting" with milk and cookies, and chat about the book! **19**

National Pancake Week starts today. Ask a parent if your family can have breakfast food for dinner. **26**

Tuesday

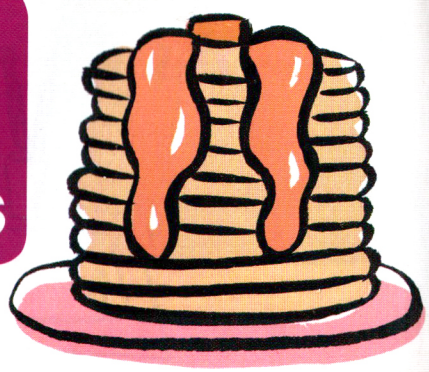
What's your dream vacation? Ask a parent if you can use the Internet to research the fancy places you'd stay, eat, shop, and sightsee. **6**



Enter for the chance to win ten best-selling American Girl books to start your club! Turn to page 2 for details.



20



ideas for a wonderful winter!



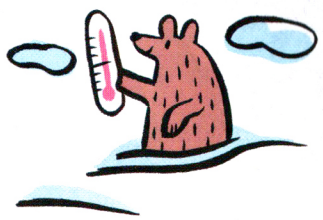
Thursday

Play Steal the Royal Hearts! The blindfolded Queen sits near a pile of heart cards. Players try to steal the cards. If the Queen hears, she yells, "Thief!" The girl who isn't caught becomes Queen. 1

Friday

In honor of Groundhog Day, predict which day you think the temperature will next reach 65 degrees, and mark your calendar with your guess. 2

Saturday



Wednesday

Take your lotion bottle into the shower with you so that the lotion won't be ice-cold when you use it later.

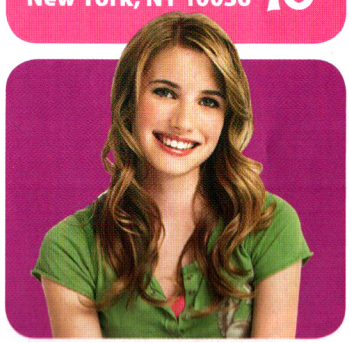


7



Put small braids in your hair before you go to sleep. You'll have a wavy 'do by morning. 9

It's Emma Roberts's birthday! Send the *Unfabulous* actress a card at: Emma Roberts c/o Nickelodeon 1515 Broadway New York, NY 10036 10

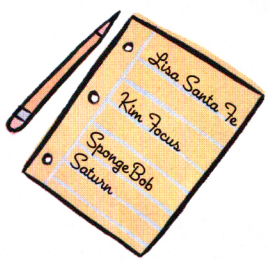


Make a Valentine for someone you normally wouldn't give one to, such as your art teacher or your dog's groomer. 14

What's the messiest thing in your room? Your sock drawer? Your jewelry box? Your desk? Figure out a way to organize your stuff, and then do it! 15



Figure out your secret-agent name. Your first name will be your favorite cartoon character's name, and your last name will be the kind of car your parents drive. 21



Need a laugh? AG's Boredom Busters can help relieve your cabin fever.



23

Play a game of Hot on the Trail. It's hide-and-seek in the snow, using footprints to find—or fool—one another. 24

Take a deep breath of cold air. Spring will be here before you know it! ★



28



February's flower is the violet, and its birthstone is the amethyst. Dress all in purple one day to celebrate!

Six Secrets for Making Your

Home Happy

Sometimes when bad weather keeps you inside, family members can start to get on one another's nerves. Try our tricks for finding family harmony.

by Amy Lynch



Schedule it.

Dance lessons, scouts, soccer practices, babysitting, and sleepovers—you have a million places to go. Put your schedule on the family calendar ahead of time. Be part of the plan.



Put it away.

Everything has a place. The tape belongs in the desk and the hammer belongs in the toolkit, so after you use them, put them back. That way, everybody will be able to find them next time.

Joke gently.

Some people in your family probably can make a joke and take a joke, but not everyone can. And no one is *always* in the mood to be teased. Respect the rules that family members set about teasing and tickling. They'll be more likely to respect your feelings, too.

Lend a hand.

Did you know that parents do nine or ten chores for every one chore a kid does? So clear the table, scrape the scraps, and toss the trash. Doing chores without being asked? Bonus points!

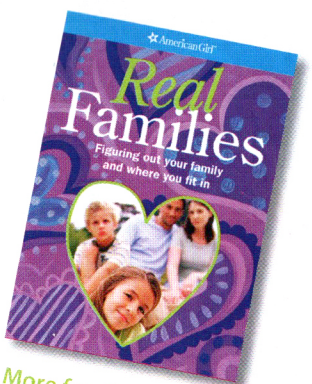


Phone home.

If you promise to call your parents at a certain time, phone home and let them know that everything is going just as planned.

Roll with it.

Your dad whistles when you're trying to study? Your sister forgets to return your books? Sometimes that's just life, and it's not worth getting upset about it. Try to relax and let a few things slide. That's part of getting along with the cast of characters you call family! ★

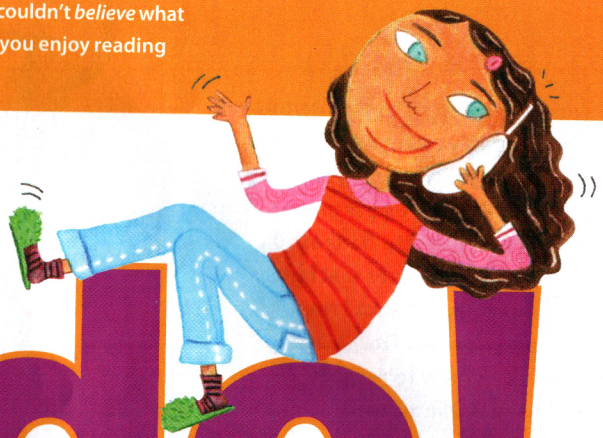


More family-friendly ideas can be found in the book *Real Families*.

Photos: Fotosearch Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

Contest Winners

Last May, we invited you to write a story that included the line: "When she looked in the mirror, she couldn't *believe* what they had done to her hair." We hope you enjoy reading these two winners!



Un-'do!

When Shaina talks Kylie into doing something different with her hair, the girls don't realize ***how*** different it will be.

by Jessica D.



Click! Kylie hung up the phone, elated and not believing her luck. She had just been invited to a slumber party by Hannah Carmichael—the coolest, friendliest girl at school. Kylie squealed with delight at the thought of bumping sleeping-bagged elbows and giggling over caramel corn and zany board games with other girls all through the night. But in mid-squeal she snatched up the phone again to speed dial her best friend, Shaina. What's the point of having great news if there's no one to share it with?

"Hello?"

"Shaina, Shaina!" gasped Kylie, bouncing up and down on her bed. "Guess what? Hannah from school invited me to her Valentine's Day slumber party! We just hung up. Do you believe it?"

Kylie could almost see Shaina's mouth curve into its warm, wide, Cheshire-cat grin when Shaina proudly announced that she, too, was invited. From there, the girls launched into a vivacious conversation about the party, which was only two days away, chattering on and on about what pajamas they

would wear and what color to paint their toenails. Suddenly the subject turned to hair, and Shaina piped up, "You know, Kylie, you ought to flair your hair for the sleepover."



"I *have* been considering laying off my pigtails."

"Exactly," said Shaina. "You need something different."

"O.K., like what?"

Shaina thought. "It has to be fun, bold, chic, but not crazy. Wait—I got it!" Kylie heard Shaina snap her fingers. "It's Valentine's Day, right? Pink is the main color, right? So, dye your hair pink!"

Kylie's jaw dropped. "Yikes, Shay, yikes! I like my hair," she said, fondly stroking a silky pigtail. "I just couldn't dye it all pink!"

"Well, not *all* of your hair. No way! That's a crazy 'do. Just the ends would be dyed. After the party, we could snip 'em right off. I could fix you up real cute and everything—"

That was probably true. Shaina's mom had a big hair salon downtown, and Shaina had spent lots of time there, just watching her mom fuss with dozens of people's hair for hours on end. Plus, Shaina kept her own thick hair in perfect condition and put it in the latest styles.

As these facts ran through her head, Kylie had to agree that Shaina could probably do her hair and do it right. So she said, "Well…O.K., Shay. If it's just the ends. I hope it'll be as cute as you say."

"Sure it will! Hey, I'll come over tomorrow to do it, if your mom says yes. Don't forget to ask her!"

"I won't. If she says yes, I'll tell you at school. See ya."

"See ya!" Click.

The next morning, Kylie presented the plan to her mother over breakfast, with Kylie's little Shih Tzu puppy, Muffy, at her feet. Mom approved, after they made a deal for her to supervise and help Shaina. After that, Kylie's confidence in Shaina's styling abilities grew, and she squealed all the way to the bus stop.

So it was settled. That afternoon Shaina was in Kylie's kitchen with the dyeing kit. After arranging an impromptu dyeing setup with a wobbly footstool, faded bedsheets, and a foot tub, Mom and Shaina slipped on latex gloves and prepared to apply the rosy dye to Kylie's hair. As Shaina carefully poured the dye compound into the tub according to the instructions, Kylie perched on the shaky stool nervously and stroked her faithful little Muffy, asleep in her lap.

"All right. O.K., Kylie, lean your head back into the tub a little, so just the ends of your hair are submerged in the dye," instructed Shaina, fidgeting with excitement.

"It's Valentine's Day, right? So, dye your hair pink!"

Just as Kylie craned her head backward to let her hair drape into the tub, it happened. Shaina's squirmy elbow jarred the tub, and the vivid dye splashed over and around Kylie. Kylie screeched like a howler monkey and startled drowsy Muffy, who bounded onto Mom. Mom, dodging Shih Tzu puppy paws, tripped over a bewildered Shaina, who pushed Kylie off the stool, and they all fell to

More than 1,800 girls entered our short-story contest!

Illustrations: Céline Malépart



the floor. Kylie found herself lying in a puddle of dye when everyone recovered.

"Oh, gracious!" Mom gasped. "Ky, go look in a mirror." Her eyes spelled trouble.

Kylie darted up the stairs, fighting hot tears of fear. She snapped on the bathroom light and turned as pale as snowflakes. When she looked in the mirror, she couldn't *believe* what they had done to her hair. It was a hot, streaky neon pink. It looked like a tacky hairstylist had done it—in the dark. To top it off, there were still occasional clumps and streaks of her normal ebony hair poking out, making the whole thing look beyond heinous.



Kylie turned on the sink faucets full blast and scrubbed her hair under the water furiously. She had to get that dye out.

When Mom, Shaina, and whimpering Muffy came pattering briskly up the stairs, Mom gave Kylie a solemn glance. She said nothing for what seemed to be a long time. Then she said quietly, "I cannot let you go anywhere looking like that. I'm going to have to cut your hair." Kylie drooped. Then Kylie gave Shaina a cold glare.

"Oh, Kylie, I am so—"

"Just shut up!" barked Kylie. "Dyeing my hair was a stupidly crazy idea, and I thought I could trust you, but now my hair is ruined! Get out!"

"But, Ky—"

"Get out!"

Shaina bounded down the stairs, sniffling and whimpering—like Muffy, kind of. Then the back door slammed.

Mom grabbed Kylie's wet hand and pulled her down the hall. "Let's go get the scissors," she said grimly. Then Kylie wilted.

The next afternoon, Kylie was groaning at the sight in the mirror of her short haircut, which to her looked almost shorn. She sulkily wandered downstairs and flopped onto the sofa. There was no way she could go to Hannah's sleepover. She would just have to



stay at home all weekend and hear about the party giggly-gossip-style on Monday.

Kylie pondered the last few days. The way she'd blown up at Shaina seemed really stupid to her now, especially because Shaina hadn't meant to knock the tub over. Kylie wished she had her mom's patience, who would be spending her weekend scrubbing the dye-splotched kitchen floor. As Kylie was thinking these repentant thoughts, the doorbell rang. There on the porch stood a somber Shaina with lonely eyes, a duffel bag, and something behind her back. "Hey," the girls said in unison.

"You go first," offered Shaina, shyly.

Kylie took a deep breath of frosty air. "Shay, I'm really sorry that I yelled at you yesterday. Knocking over that tub was an accident, and it's O.K. Really. And…your idea was not stupid or crazy. I think it would've worked. But there's no way I can go anywhere with hair like this," she sighed. "I'm a mess."

"Four things," said Shaina. "One, I most certainly forgive you, and I'm really sorry, too. Yesterday was crazy, so let's put it behind us. Second, please take this as an 'I'm-really-very-sorry-that-I-wrecked-your-hair' gift." Shaina then pulled a chic magenta beret from behind her back and centered it on Kylie's head. "See, I picked it so we'll match," said Shaina, angling a similar cap on her head ever so slightly.

"Well, why are you wearing a hat, oh Rapunzel? With your perfect hair?" Kylie teased playfully, in a much better mood after apologizing.

Shaina smiled a pained little smile. "This is third." Suddenly, Shaina snatched off her beret and Kylie gasped with shock, for her best friend's locks were cut short—as short as her own!

"My mom and I talked it over, and she even offered to cut it for me. But I told her no, that I'd cut it myself, without the glitz, so that my friend and I would be even," Shaina confessed.

"Friends," said Kylie softly, squeezing a familiar mittened hand. "I like that."

"Me, too." And Shaina's mouth curved back into her natural, happy-hearted, Cheshire-cat grin, which Kylie met with a bright one of her own.

"Yeah. Wait, so what was the fourth thing?"

"Oh, yeah! Ky, you are *so* coming to Hannah's party with me!"

So, fifteen minutes later, the two happiest short-haired pajamaed girls in the history of Valentine's Day linked arms giggling and bounced down the street to the slumber party, friends once more. ★

Meet the Author



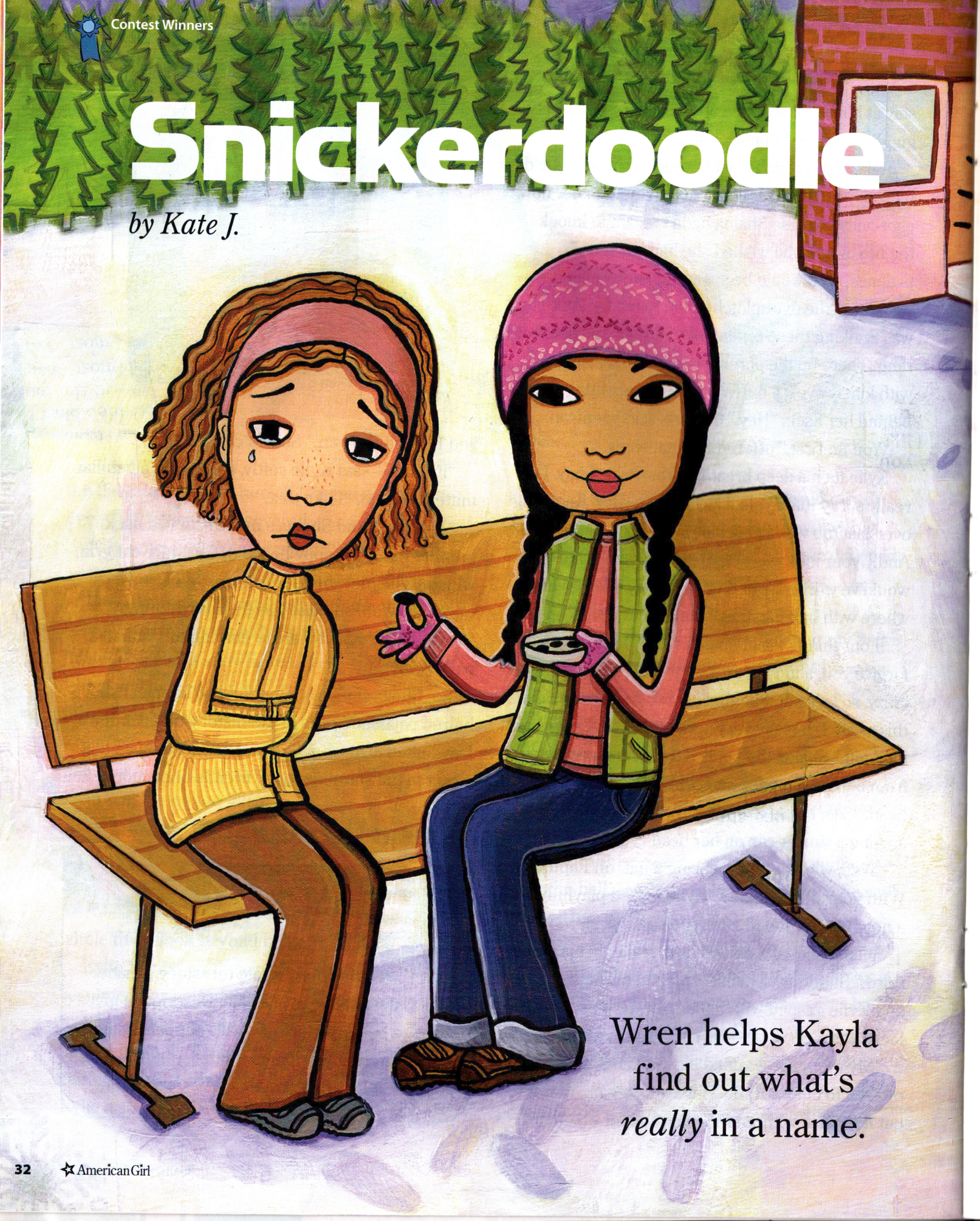
Jessica D.

When I wrote this story, I made it as descriptive as possible. Description gives you a better picture of what's happening and makes reading a lot more fun.

Jessica, age 12, lives in Mississippi.

Snickerdoodle

by Kate J.



Wren helps Kayla find out what's *really* in a name.

Kayla Bobsburger dashed out of the cafeteria, huge wet tears coming down the sides of her freckled nose, dozens at a time. She plunged out the school door and onto the playground where her best friend, Wren, sat on a bench. Kayla wiped her red, runny nose with the sleeve of her sweater and sat next to Wren.

Wren was the kind of friend who was really down to earth. In fact, most of the time she was down *in* the earth! She liked to discover the wonders of nature everywhere—in the dirt, up a tree, or in a flower. *Just like the wren bird,* Kayla thought. Wren was always very quiet and usually would talk only to Kayla. "What happened?" Wren asked.

"They were so awful. I wish they'd stop teasing me about my name. I can't take it anymore! I hate them, Wren! I hate them!"

Wren gave a very kind, knowing look to Kayla. "I hate them, too," she said quietly. She reached into her hoodie's kangaroo pocket and pulled out a small tin full of Junior Mints candies. They were Kayla's favorite. "Cheer up," Wren said, passing Kayla the candy. "In a few days we'll be headed to snowboarding camp, and you'll forget all about these bullies." Kayla couldn't help but smile, and soon they were giggling and talking about the adventures they were going to have at camp.

On a cloudy, freezing Sunday morning, Kayla and Wren were being driven up to Crystal Top Mountain by Wren's mom in a shiny green electric-hybrid car. They were singing "The Lion Sleeps Tonight." "Aaaheee-ee-ee-ee-ee, um-bum-bawayy! A weem-ba-weh, a weem-ba-weh, a weem-ba-weh," all three sang in joyful unison.

When the song was over, Wren's mom said, "Now remember, girls, at camp you have to be open to trying new things. You got it?"

"Sure, Mom," Wren said, and Kayla nodded.

"All right," Wren's mom said, laughing. "Let's rock and roll!"

"Woo hoo!" they all yelled. They pulled into the campus, and the camp day began.



A college-age counselor wearing a blue sweater that read "Crystal Top Mountain Staff" stood in front of a line of kids. "When I call your name, step forward and I will tell you your cabin number," he said. "But before I do, I'd like to remind you that you will be using nicknames of your own choosing, so think about picking one today. Any questions?" No one spoke. "O.K. Tony Hall?"

The names swept by quickly, but Kayla was worried. It was likely that everyone would laugh at her last name, just like the bullies at school. So when the counselor said, "Kayla—ooh, this name's a good one!" she knew she was in for it.

"I apologize if I say this incorrectly: Kayla BOBSBURGER?!" Everyone instantly began

Illustrations: Jennifer Kalis

cracking up like a pack of hyenas. Kayla hung her head and trudged to the front.

"Here, Miz Bobsburger!" The counselor pointed straight ahead to cabin number 13. *More bad luck,* she thought as the snickers and teasing disappeared behind her.

Kayla opened the door to the cabin and went inside. She plopped her stuff down on a bed and looked around.

Just at that moment, the door opened and Wren emerged. "So, you're here, too?" she said. "That's good. At least we'll be together after—" she lowered her voice, "—what happened outside. But I figured out a plan," Wren said. "We'll find a nickname that's perfect, just for you, and everyone will forget about your old name. Now let's go get some dinner. Whadya say?"

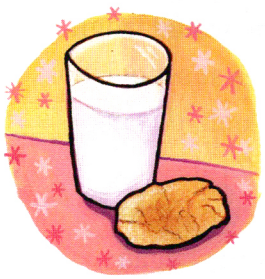
"Dinner," Kayla said, and they began their hike to the dining hall.

"Snickerdoodle? What's a snickerdoodle?" Kayla inquired, reading the dessert sign. "I've never even heard of it!"

"Me, either," Wren shrugged, "but you should at least try it."

"Oh, Wren, of course I'll try it!" Kayla laughed. She picked up a pair of tongs, grabbed a snickerdoodle, and put it on her plate.

"You know what?" Wren said. "You can never have cookies without milk." Kayla gave her a look. "It's true," Wren laughed.



"Oh, all right," Kayla said and poured herself a glass. They sat down and began to eat their dinner. Kayla took a bite of the cookie. It was buttery and cinnamony. She took another bite. And another. It was delicious. She went back for more. Minutes later, she had eaten three snickerdoodle cookies. "I LOVE these!" she cried. "They're heavenly."

"Kayla, that's it!" Wren yelled. Several heads turned. A counselor murmured something and shook her head.

"Shush, Wren," Kayla whispered. "What's 'it'?"

"Your nickname! It really fits! A well-rounded person with a funny name and a spicy side. Think of it, Kayla, your nickname—Snickerdoodle!"

"Well, O.K.," Kayla decided. "I like it." But that night, she had nightmares about a snickerdoodle cookie being eaten by bullies.

The next morning, Kayla fell out of bed and banged her head badly. She winced and put her hand on the hurt spot, but quickly pulled it back when she realized what she was touching. "Is this…KETCHUP?" Kayla roared in anger as she smelled the red substance on her fingertips. "It can't be…"

"Blood," came a boy's voice from the doorway.

"It can't be salsa, either," snickered another.

"So you'd be right!" laughed yet another boy as they ran away.



Kayla took a shortcut to the restroom building to see just what was on her head. "You little jerks, you little creeps," she muttered all the way.

Kayla entered the girls' restroom. When she looked in the mirror, she couldn't *believe* what they had done to her hair. On one half of her head was ketchup, on the other was mustard, and sprinkled all over were relish, onions, and pickles. As a bonus, her freckled face looked just like a



sesame seed bun. She was utterly speechless.

Kayla took a shower and shampooed three times. But the dark cloud of anger was still hovering over her head, and she wished dearly that the bullies would suffer.

Just then Wren came in, out of breath. Her smile faded when she saw her friend's face. Wren took a breath and said, "Believe it or not, I know everything about your terrible predicament."

Kayla didn't say anything. Wren knew she wanted her to say more. "The counselors caught those boys and made them confess to the whole thing. You don't have to worry, because they were sentenced to community service."

"What kind?" Kayla asked.

"Shoveling snow all day and a note home. And missing out on campfires and hot chocolate." Wren added with a grin, "Follow me, Snickerdoodle."

The two girls sat outside in front of a firepit singing songs and drinking cocoa. Kayla smiled because she knew she was not a hamburger—she was a snickerdoodle. And as a bonus, her freckles looked just like a pinch of cinnamon sugar. ★

Meet the Author



Kate J.

I loosely based some of the characters in this story on my family. We have our sad, happy, and angry moments together in the story of our lives, so I wanted to bring a little bit of that into this story, too.

Kate, age 11, lives in California.

Honorable Mentions

Katiana S.
Age 9, Virginia

Nicole A.
Age 14, New Jersey

Hope T.
Age 12, Utah

Katie V.
Age 14, Tennessee

Rebecca M.
Age 9, New Jersey

Katie D.
Age 14, Colorado

New Contest!

It's time for another story contest. Here are the rules:

1 Write a story that includes the line: "When Leah walked in wearing pajamas, everyone stared."

Give your story a fall setting. All characters in your story must be original creations.

2 Your story shouldn't be longer than four handwritten pages or three typed pages.

3 Include your first and last name, address, phone number, school photo, and birth date. You and your parent must sign your story, stating that you made it up.

4 Mail your story to the address on page 2 by February 10. Winners will appear in the September/October 2007 issue.

Brainwaves

activities and puzzles

Photo Fun

How sweet! Find the matching pair of pictures sent in by Olivia C., age 10, from Connecticut.











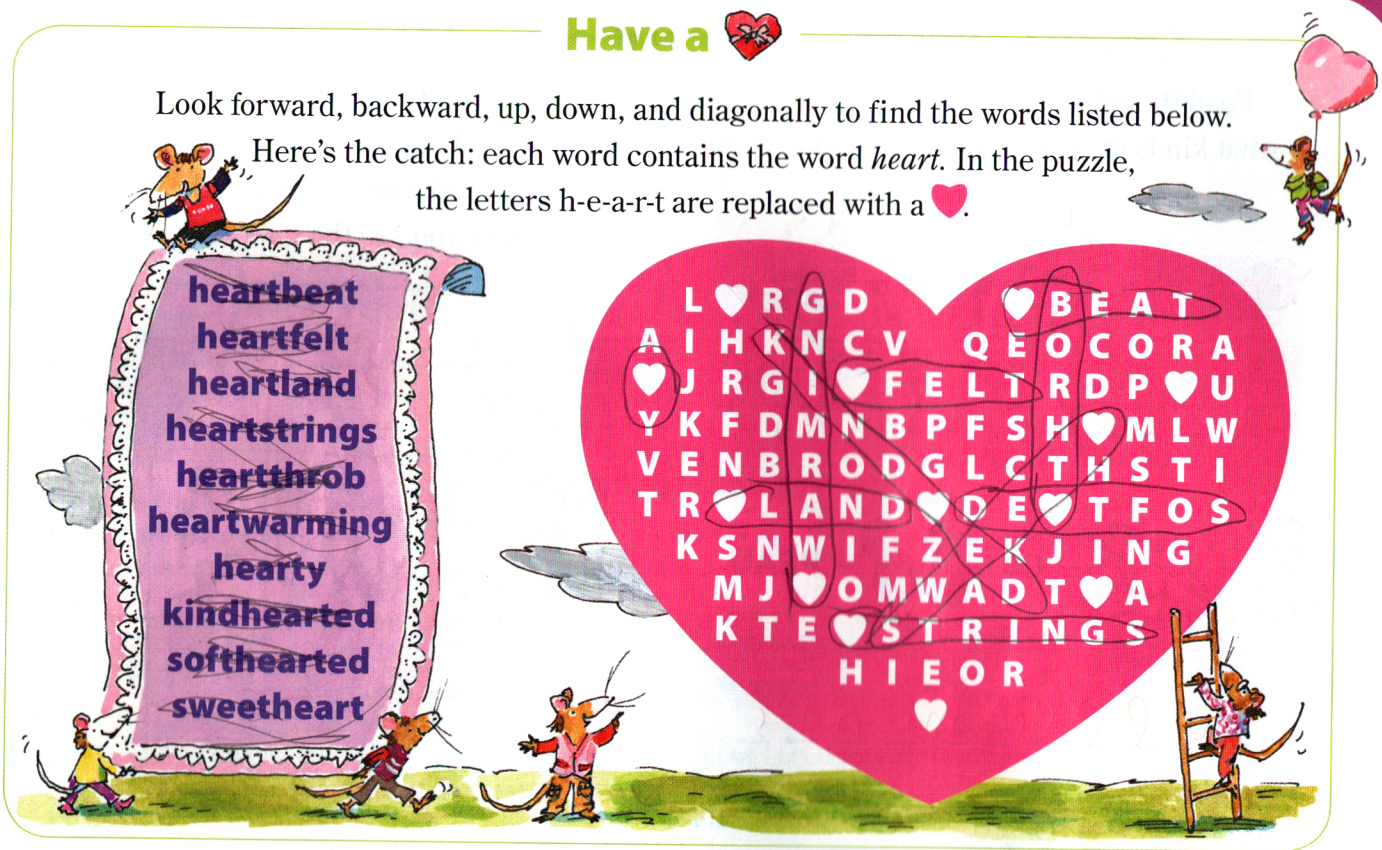


Send us a fun photo! Mail a copy of your best shot to the address on page 2 along with your name, age, and signature. Sorry, we can't return photos.

Illustrations: Paul Meisel

Have a ♥

Look forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally to find the words listed below. Here's the catch: each word contains the word *heart*. In the puzzle, the letters h-e-a-r-t are replaced with a ♥.



Pretty Paper

Eva's making a garland. But she has only six snowflakes and six hearts left. Can you finish the pattern on the long end of the string, using up all her shapes?



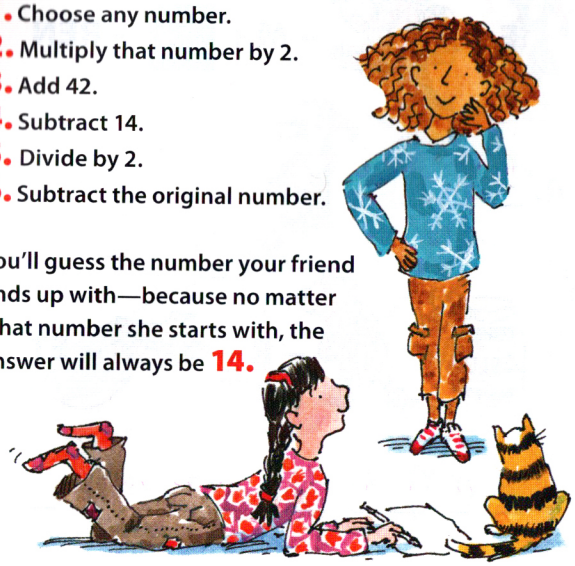
February 14

Try this amazing puzzle on your friends this Valentine's Day!

Ask a friend to grab a pencil and a sheet of paper. Then…

1. Choose any number.
2. Multiply that number by 2.
3. Add 42.
4. Subtract 14.
5. Divide by 2.
6. Subtract the original number.

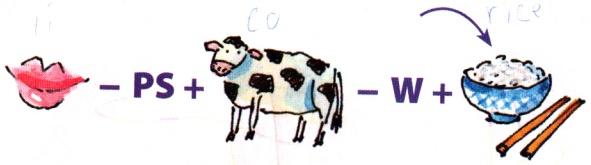
You'll guess the number your friend ends up with—because no matter what number she starts with, the answer will always be 14.



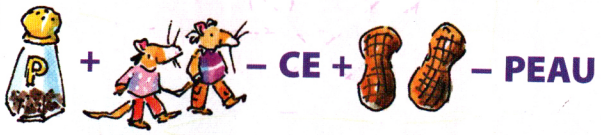
Illustrations: Paul Meisel

Candy Counter

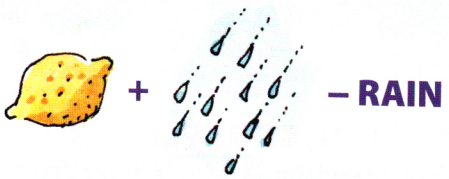
Read the rebus signs to figure out what kinds of candy are on sale today.



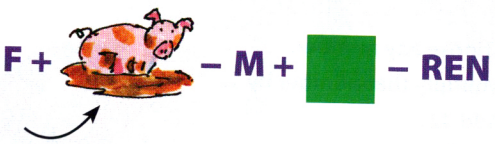
1. licorice



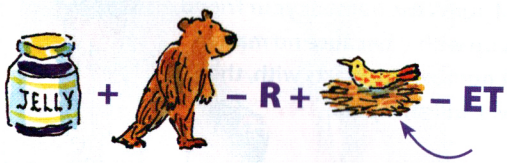
2. peppermints



3. lemon drops



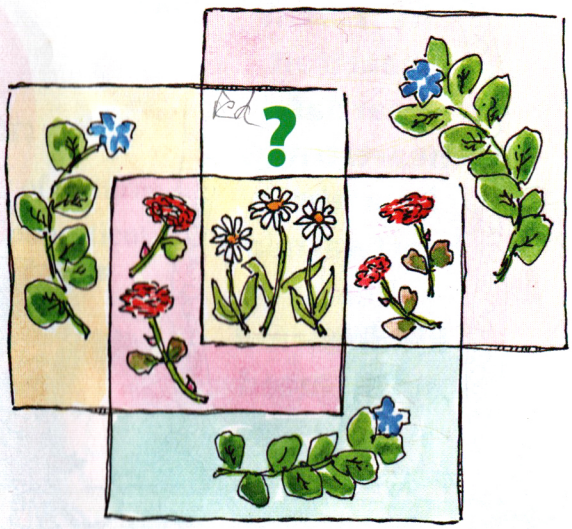
4. fudge



5. Jelly beans

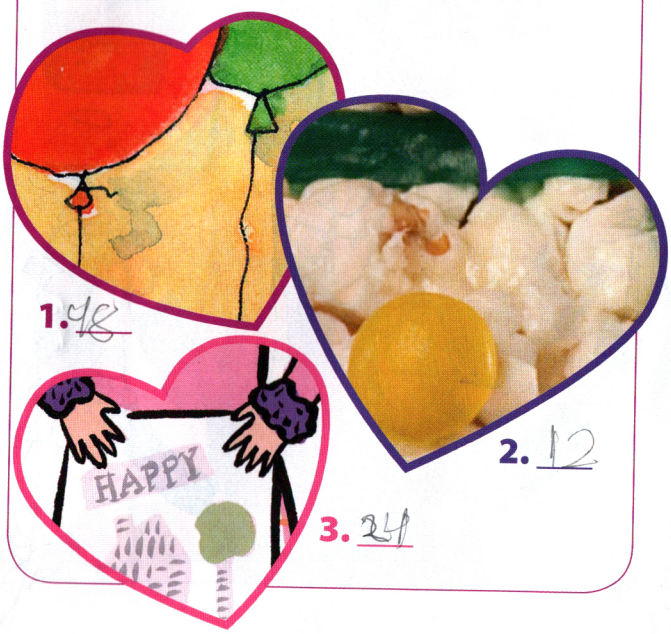
Flower Fun

Roses are red, violets are blue, and daisies are white. Look for a pattern to figure out how many red roses belong in the rectangle where you see the question mark.



Heart Sleuth

Search the pages of this issue to find where each snippet of a photo or illustration shown below came from. Write down the page number where you found it.



1. 48

2. 12

3. 24

Laffateria

Why did the flower cross the road?



To get to her buds

Melanie H.
Age 12, Tennessee

What kind of fruit do lions love?



Grrrapes

Vanessa D.
Age 11, Maryland

What do fairies give on Valentine's Day?



Hugs and wishes

Morgan R.
Age 11, Indiana

What did one volcano say to the other volcano on Valentine's Day?



"Do you lava me like I lava you?"

Wendy L.
Age 14, North Carolina

Where would you see cows on a date?



At the mooovies!

Hollianne L.
Age 12, New York

What is black and white and black and white and black and white?



A penguin rolling down a hill

Madeline A.
Age 9, Maryland

Funny Business

Send your best joke to Brain Waves! Write to the address on page 2. Include your name, birth date, school photo, and signature.



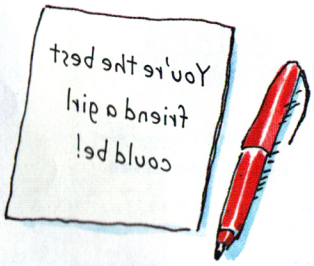
Mirror Message

Send a secret valentine to a friend!

1. Write your message in black marker on a plain piece of paper.



2. When the ink is dry, flip the paper over and trace your message on the other side.



3. Make a valentine and attach your message. Let your friend know that she should hold it up to a mirror to read it!





Answer Box

Photo Fun

The matching photos are 1 and 5.



Have a



Pretty Paper

Starting on the long end of the string where the other shapes left off, Eva should add three snowflakes, then three hearts, then two snowflakes, then two hearts, then one snowflake, then one heart.

Candy Counter

1. licorice; 2. peppermints; 3. lemon drops; 4. fudge; 5. jelly beans

Flower Fun

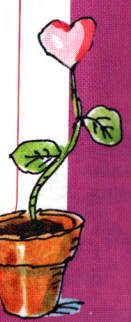
Two roses

Heart Sleuth

1. page 48; 2. page 12; 3. page 24

Buzzword

Quirks is used on pages 14 and 22.



HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

I got the part of Juliet in my theater class. The guy who plays Romeo is nice, but I really don't want to kiss him. What do I do?

Juliet

If you force yourself to kiss Romeo, the fact that you really don't want to will show, and it won't look very good onstage. Instead, ask your director if you can do a "stage kiss." You put your hand on Romeo's face and gently turn it a bit toward the back of the stage. When you lean in to kiss him, just kiss your thumb instead. It will look real to the audience, even though it isn't. Practice to make it look natural and always stay in character.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I am a perfectionist. When my friends and I work on a group project, if something isn't how I think it should be, I can get bossy. Then we argue. Help!

perfect

It's good to be a leader, but no one likes to feel bossed around. On a group project, each person should have some of the responsibility. Worry about *your* part of the project first. Then, if you have time, offer to help the others, but remember that you are *not* in charge of their parts. If you are supportive and helpful instead of bossy, you'll win your friends' respect—and turn in a good project.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I have some secrets I don't want to tell my friends. Do I have to tell them?

Secret Keeper

It's not a good idea to share everything with your friends. But be honest—have you bragged about having secrets? Have you said things such as, "I know who Kelsey likes, but it's a secret"? If so, you can't blame your friends for wanting to know more. But if you're being pressured to tell something you haven't been talking about, such as your own personal thoughts or a family secret, you can simply say, "I really don't want to talk about it," and change the subject.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I started making bracelets and everyone wants one. I don't want to say no, so now I'm overbooked making bracelets. What should I do?

It's great that people like your bracelets, but making them should be fun. If you sold your bracelets, fewer people might want them, and you'd be making money, too. You could also have a party and show your friends how to make bracelets. Finally, you can say no when someone asks for a bracelet. You could say, "Wow, I'm flattered that you like my jewelry, but I'm swamped with requests. Sorry, I just can't make you one right now." Good luck!

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

MORE HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

I want to throw the best party ever! I want to invite everyone so that I can get popular. But what if people don't come?

popular dilemma

Being popular means being well-liked, and the best way to make that happen is to be kind and fair to everyone all the time—not just on one special occasion. If you want to have a party, go ahead. But you should know that no one ever got popular because of one party. The secret to a successful party is to invite people who are already your friends. You could invite one or two girls you'd like to get to know better, but you'll have more fun if you are good friends with most of your guests already.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I'm an only child. I like it, except that I moved and my new friends think I'm spoiled. At first I thought it was because they didn't know me and it would stop after a little while, but it hasn't. They just don't seem to get it. How do I lose that stereotype?

Not Spoiled!

You don't need to hide your good fortune, but you can downplay it. Instead of talking about the things you have, talk about your thoughts, feelings, and interests. Remember to point out and appreciate the things your friends have. You could say, "I like my room, but I love the color you painted your room," or, "I think it would be fun to have a baby sister. Yours is so cute!" This will help your friends feel less jealous and let them get to know the real you.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I have this BIG problem. I want to tell my parents or somebody about it, but I'm afraid that I'd be in big trouble afterward.

trouble

Be brave and tell your parents now. You'll be in less trouble if you talk to them than if you try to hide it. Pick a good place and time to talk, and start by telling them about your fears. It's no fun to carry around a big problem. Even if you do get into trouble, you'll be glad that you're not hiding anything anymore.

★

Advice from You

"If you didn't get the part you wanted in a school play, it doesn't mean you're a bad actress. It simply means you weren't meant for that role. There is always next year's play, so don't give up!"

nicolette h.
Age 12, Florida

Need advice? Got advice? Write:
Help!
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



We had a wonderful wintry wardrobe to choose from at our photo shoot. Which outfit do you like best?

Go to americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls" to vote for your favorite.





OH BOY

Happy Birthday, Mercer!

Mercer, the dog from "It Takes Two," will be turning five in February. In honor of his birthday, ask a parent if you can collect food for a local animal shelter and donate it in Mercer's name.

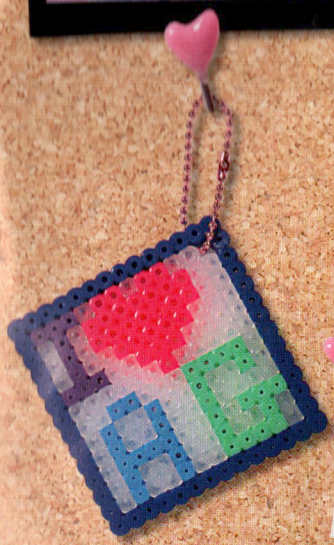
Behind the Scenes

We just *loved* working on this heart-filled issue of *American Girl!*

BE MINE



Our food stylist, Tobe, puts the finishing touches on the Sweet Snowpeople.





Jessa H. won our hearts with her key chain creation for the paperless Valentine contest. For more of our favorite entries, go to americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls."

HONEY

Send a **picture** of **you** and your **ideas** to *American Girl* at the address on page 2.

Sorry, we can't return photos.



What a great idea! Anna K. and her friends made a Valentine garland by connecting hearts that each girl made.

Don't forget to enter the fiction contest on page 35. For great writing tips, go to "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com.

LOVE YA

Get Cooking!

Meet girl cooks and get good food tips *you* can try.



"Mom, can I talk to you?"

Great advice on how to handle difficult discussions with your parents

American Girl®



Coming up in the March/April issue

Go to americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls" for more magazine fun!

Mystery Madness

Puzzling activities to test your detective skills

Spring Sparkle

Cool beaded jewelry that you can make and wear

Tattling Tales

Girls share their ideas about when it is—and isn't—O.K. to tell.



Fun for Cheap

Clever ideas for *almost*-free fun!



Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi